

To: Scott Hommel[scott_hommel@ios.doi.gov]; Nancy Guiden[nancy_guiden@ios.doi.gov]; Mashburn, Lori[lori_mashburn@ios.doi.gov]; Daniel Jorjani[daniel_jorjani@ios.doi.gov]; James Cason[james_cason@ios.doi.gov]; Megan Bloomgren[megan_bloomgren@ios.doi.gov]; Swift, Heather[heather_swift@ios.doi.gov]; Micah Chambers[micah_chambers@ios.doi.gov]; Magallanes, Downey[downey_magallanes@ios.doi.gov]; Bauserman, Christine[christine_bauserman@ios.doi.gov]; Laura Rigas[laura_rigas@ios.doi.gov]; Caroline Boulton[caroline_boulton@ios.doi.gov]
From: Domenech, Douglas
Sent: 2017-05-18T13:52:10-04:00
Importance: Normal
Subject: Interior Cabinet Affairs Report for 5/18/17
Received: 2017-05-18T13:52:38-04:00
[DOI DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS 5-18-17.docx](#)

DOI DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS – 5/18/17

Doug Domenech, Senior Advisor

NOTE: David Bernhardt, the President's nominee for Deputy Secretary will have his confirmation hearing today.

Status of the Secretary

TODAY: The Secretary will:

5/18: Call with Senator King

5/18: Interview with GQ.

5/18: Participate in a National Park shooting event at Fort Meade.

5/18: Meet with Rep. Scott Taylor.

THIS WEEK

5/19: Call scheduled with Rep. Greg Walden, Rep. Culberson, Rep. Tom Cole.

5/19: Interview: Michael Carpel | Fox News

NEXT WEEK

5/22-5/24 DC

5/25 PM The Secretary will participate in a CODEL sponsored by Senator Murkowski and the Arctic Council.

5/26 CODEL: Norway

5/27 CODEL: Greenland, Alaska (National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska), Fairbanks

FURTHER OUT:

5/28 Denali

5/29 Denali, Anchorage

5/30 Anchorage (Internal meetings)

5/31 Anchorage (Alaska Oil & Gas Association Remarks)

6/1 Depart for Boise, ID

6/2 Boise, ID (NIFC with Sec. Perdue)

6/3 Depart for DC

Upcoming Media

Planned Release Today: **USGS: In Next Decades, Frequency of Coastal Flooding Will**

Double Globally

The frequency and severity of coastal flooding throughout the world will increase rapidly and eventually double in frequency over the coming decades even with only moderate amounts of sea level rise, according to a new study released today in “Nature Scientific Reports.” This increase in flooding will be greatest and most damaging in tropical regions, impairing the economies of coastal cities and the habitability of low-lying Pacific island nations. Many of the world's largest populated low-lying deltas (such as the Ganges, Indus, Yangtze, Mekong and Irrawaddy Rivers), also fall in or near this affected tropical region.

WEEK AHEAD May 17 thru May 25, 2017 (submitted to WH Comms)

May 18: David Bernhard will have his Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing (for Deputy Secretary nomination) starting at 10:15am.

May 18: Zinke will complete first interview by GQ for a feature profile.

May 19: Zinke will be interviewed by Fox News for national and affiliate Memorial Day special.

May 23: DOI and Bureaus issue News Releases on President's FY18 Budget

May 23: Acting Deputy Secretary Jim Cason to Testify: House Natural Resources Oversight Hearing on the Status and Future of the Cobell Land Consolidation

May 24: Cameron and Mikkelsen to Testify on Reclamation Budget: Special Assistant to the Secretary Scott Cameron and Acting Commissioner Alan Mikkelsen will testify before the House Energy and Water Development Appropriations Committee, in a joint hearing with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, on the Bureau of Reclamation's fiscal year 2018 budget proposal.

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

TBD: Press Release on GoMMAPPS, a partnership program to improve protected species assessments in the Gulf of Mexico.

May 18: Press Release on Final Notice of Sale for Alaska Cook Inlet Lease Sale

May 23: Bloomberg Government Event: Jim Bennett to speak during Bloomberg government event, “Invest in Innovation: Building the Economy of the Future.” Event is from 4:00pm to 6:00pm at the Bloomberg global headquarters in New York. The program will be staged before a live audience of 100 senior investors, including asset managers, institutional investors and private equity investors, executives from energy companies, and top government officials focused on clean energy and sustainable investing. It will be open to the media and will be on the record.

Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement

May 22: News Release announcing new BSEE Director

Bureau of Indian Affairs

May 22: The Land Buy Back Program would like to issue its next release, announcing that \$\$ millions in buyback offers have been mailed to enrolled members of the Winnebago (Wisconsin) and Omaha (Nebraska) Tribes. (This is the latest in a series of releases when buy-back offers are made to tribal members) Note May 23: House Oversight Hearing on LBBP.

U.S. Geological Survey

May 18: USGS National News Release: In Next Decades, Frequency of Coastal Flooding Will Double Globally. Background: The research paper, "Doubling of coastal flooding frequency within decades due to sea-level rise," is scheduled to be published online in Nature Science Reports, May 18. Embargo lifts at 9:00 am EDT.

May 18: USGS Local Media Advisory: Earthquake Alliance to meet at USGS

May 23: USGS National News Release: *draft* New Iguana Species Discovered

May 23: Joint National News Release: Searching to Study the Remaining Few - USGS Science on World Turtle Day

TBD: Strategic Minerals Release

Speaking Invitations

Accepted

5/25 US Oil & Gas Association Board of Directors Meeting (DC)

5/31 Alaska Oil and Gas Association Conference remarks in Anchorage

6/6 Recreation Vehicle Industry Association Joint Committee Lunch (DC)

Regretted

5/19 Montana Logging Association Annual Meeting (Bozeman, MT)

5/19 Haskell Indian Nations University Commencement (Lawrence, KS)

5/19 Montana Marine Corps League Convention (Anaconda, MT)

5/19 Laffer Associates Conference (DC)

5/20 Zoar Maifest National Historic Landmark Designation (Zoar, OH)

5/20 Mineral County Community Support Group's Annual Armed Forces Appreciation Day (Superior, MT)

5/23 7th Annual Massachusetts Fallen Heroes Dinner (Boston, MA)

5/23 Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians Mid-Year Convention (Portland, OR)

5/24 Virginia Chamber of Commerce Energy Conference (Surrogate is V Devito)

5/24 National Wildlife Refuge Association (DC)

5/28 Rolling Thunder Demonstration Run (DC)

5/29 Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund Memorial Day Event (DC)

6/3 Ducks Unlimited National Convention (San Antonio, TX)

6/4 Annual Native American Economic Development Conference (Las Vegas, NV)

6/4 Montana American Legion Boys State Session (Helena, MT)

6/5 Society of American Indian Government Employees Annual Training Program (Scottsdale, AZ)

6/12 Association of American State Geologists Annual Meeting (Branson, MO)

6/13 National Conference of American Indians (Mohegan Sun, CT)

6/13 National Marine Sanctuary Foundations' Ocean Awards Gala (DC)

6/14 Western Farm Bureaus Meeting (Coeur d'Alene, ID)

Outstanding Invitations in Process

5/23 Southwest Border Forum (Phoenix, AZ)

Emergency Management

In Georgia, the West Mims Fire in the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge has burned 152,231 (no change) acres. The fire is 31-percent (+8) contained and managed by a Type-1

Incident Management Team with 1050 (+79) personnel, including 179 (+25) DOI personnel. There are 320 (-480) residences and 7 (no change) commercial structures threatened. The containment date is November 1.

The Crown Mountain Fire, which began on May 14 within the Big Bend National Park in Texas, has burned 944 (-97) acres. The fire is 89-percent (+9) contained and managed by a Type-3 Incident Management Team with 81 (-81) personnel, including 16 (-20) DOI personnel. Demobilization and transition to a Big Bend National Park Type-4 IMT is ongoing. The containment date is May 22.

Media of Interest

Bernhardt Faces Opposition As Nominee For Top Interior Spot.

The Washington Examiner (5/17) reports that, in “an eleventh-hour push,” more than 100 environmental groups sent a letter to all senators calling for them to not support the confirmation of David Bernhardt as Interior Department deputy secretary. The groups argue that “Bernhardt’s representation of oil, coal and mining companies during his career in private legal practice as a major conflict of interest that will jeopardize the nation’s federal lands.” In the letter, the groups argue Bernhardt “should not seek, accept or be granted any exemptions from issues that he may have a conflict.” The Hill (5/17, Henry) predicts “a contentious confirmation hearing,” with opponents “gearing up to scrutinize his professional history and the role he intends to play in a Trump Interior Department that had already ruffled feathers among greens and conservationists.” Critics say that Bernhardt’s lobbying makes him a “walking conflict of interest.”

Zinke: National Bison Range To Remain Under FWS Management.

The Missoulian (MT) (5/17, Chaney) reports Interior Secretary confirmed his intention to keep the National Bison Range under US Fish and Wildlife Service management. FWS was “on track to transfer Bison Range management to” the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) “until the end of President Barack Obama’s administration.” Zinke said in a Wednesday press release, “As secretary, my job is to look 100 years forward at all of Interior’s resources. I recognize the Bison Range is a critical part of our past, present and future, which is why I have changed course.” Zinke announced April 12 his intention to revisit the transfer plan “and restart the Bison Ridge’s comprehensive conservation plan,” and Wednesday’s announcement “expanded on that.”

Zinke: No Decisions Made On National Monuments.

The Lake Powell (AZ) Chronicle (5/17, Law) reports Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke was in Kanab, Arizona, last Wednesday after touring portions of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument with Kane and Garfield county commissioners. Zinke met with reporters in Kanab and emphasize that neither the Trump Administration nor the department had reached a conclusion on the possibility of rescinding or shrinking 27 of America’s national monuments. He told reporters, “These are absolutely places that need to be protected, and that is our ultimate goal, to make sure the land is managed well.” Zinke added, “Everyone wants to protect their culture and traditions. There are a lot of things we can do better.” According to the article, Zinke “emphasized that he and the Department of the Interior are considering input from all parties involved from local governments.”

Washington Monument To Display Plaque From Ireland.

The AP (5/18) reports the National Park Service on Thursday “will accept a plaque from the people of Ireland that will be hung in the staircase of the monument.” The plaque “highlights the connection between the 2016 centennials of the park service and Ireland’s Easter Rising.” The monument’s stairwell “has scores of commemorative stones, most of which were received in the mid-19th century,” and the NPS says news donations are accepted “only in very rare circumstances.”

Ex-BLM Head Tells US House Committee National Monuments Hurt Local Economies.

The Lake Powell Life (5/17) reports former BLM head Kathleen Clarke appeared before a US House committee and “blasted national monuments for harming local economies and communities’ way of life.” She told the committee, “Monuments have had significant and negative impacts on the traditional uses of these lands and on the lives and livelihoods of local populations.” She added, “Landscapes don’t disappear, but jobs do.” The article mentions her position “contradicts the findings of two recent studies into the effects of monument creation.”

BLM Looking For Ways To Speed Up Application Process.

Fuel Fix (TX) (5/17, Osborne) reports that a drilling application backlog is hampering new oil and gas drilling on federal lands, as more than 3,000 applications for drilling permits are awaiting review at the Bureau of Land Management, according to E&E News. Acting Director Mike Nedd said the agency is working on several strategies to speed up the application process. He said, “It may be a strike team. It may be shifting the workload to a different office.” Neal Kirby, spokesman for the Independent Petroleum Association of America, said, “Every day that goes by while independent producers — companies with an average of 12 employees — wait for their permits to be approved means more money out of their own pockets.”

SCOTUS Denies Challenge To New York Land Trust Decision.

The Rome (NY) Sentinel (5/17) reports the US Supreme Court on Monday denied a petition from a group of plaintiffs challenging “a New York federal judge’s March 2015 ruling that Interior had reasonably decided to take thousands of acres in Oneida and Madison counties, including the Turning Stone Resort Casino in Verona and the Oneidas’ 32 acres of reservation land in Madison County, into trust for the Oneidas.” Interior placed the land into a trust “following the 2013 agreement with the state, Oneidas, and Oneida and Madison counties that settled trust land and tax issues.”

White House Communications Report

Sent to WH Comms on 05/16/2017

Inquiries

- A number of local outlets (REQUEST) Looking for the Department’s statement regarding the temporary pause in FACA committees. (RESPONSE) – “The Secretary is committed to restoring trust in the Department’s decision-making and that begins with institutionalizing state and local input and ongoing collaboration, particularly in communities surrounding public lands. The Department currently has more than 200 boards, committees, and other internal and external advisory functions that are authorized to solicit input and meet

periodically. To maximize feedback from these boards and ensure their compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act and the President's recent executive orders, the Department is currently reviewing the charter and charge of each Board/Advisory Committee. This review process necessitates the temporary postponement of advisory committee meetings. As the Department concludes its review in the weeks ahead, agencies will notice future meetings to ensure that the Department continues to get the benefit of the views of local communities in all decision-making on public land management."

Top Stories

- E&E Daily: 3K drilling permit applications await BLM approval
- Washington Examiner: Environmental groups seek to block Bernhardt's confirmation at Interior
- KPAX TV (MT): National Bison Range to retain federal management

Top Issues and Accomplishments

- FYI – 150 Left Green Groups urge Senate to vote no on Dep Sec Nominee Bernhardt. The Outdoor Recreation Industry Roundtable wrote a letter supporting.
- Last week Secretary Zinke toured the Grand Staircase Escalante and the Bears Ears national monuments as part of President Trump's EO reviewing a number of large and controversial monuments. Dozens of media followed the trip. Very positive local coverage. A physical package of local clips will be sent.
- This week, Secretary Zinke is in D.C.
- THURSDAY – Zinke will complete first interview by GQ for a feature profile.
- FRIDAY – Zinke will be interviewed by Fox News for national and affiliate Memorial Day special.
- FRIDAY – The National Park Service will announce the price of the Senior Pass will increase to \$80. This is a Congressionally-mandated increase.
- NEXT WEEK – The NPS will announce the cost of the deferred maintenance backlog

Federal Register Listings

No items were cleared for the FR on Wednesday.

Doug Domenech
Senior Advisor
US Department of the Interior

DOI DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS – 5/18/17

Doug Domenech, Senior Advisor

NOTE: David Bernhardt, the President's nominee for Deputy Secretary will have his confirmation hearing today.

Status of the Secretary

TODAY: The Secretary will:

5/18: Call with Senator King

5/18: Interview with GQ.

5/18: Participate in a National Park shooting event at Fort Meade.

5/18: Meet with Rep. Scott Taylor.

THIS WEEK

5/19: Call scheduled with Rep. Greg Walden, Rep. Culberson, Rep. Tom Cole.

5/19: Interview: Michael Carpel | Fox News

NEXT WEEK

5/22-5/24 DC

5/25 PM The Secretary will participate in a CODEL sponsored by Senator Murkowski and the Arctic Council.

5/26 CODEL: Norway

5/27 CODEL: Greenland, Alaska (National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska), Fairbanks

FURTHER OUT:

5/28 Denali

5/29 Denali, Anchorage

5/30 Anchorage (Internal meetings)

5/31 Anchorage (Alaska Oil & Gas Association Remarks)

6/1 Depart for Boise, ID

6/2 Boise, ID (NIFC with Sec. Perdue)

6/3 Depart for DC

Upcoming Media

Planned Release Today: **USGS: In Next Decades, Frequency of Coastal Flooding Will Double Globally**

The frequency and severity of coastal flooding throughout the world will increase rapidly and eventually double in frequency over the coming decades even with only moderate amounts of sea level rise, according to a new study released today in "Nature Scientific Reports." This increase in flooding will be greatest and most damaging in tropical regions, impairing the economies of coastal cities and the habitability of low-lying Pacific island nations. Many of the world's largest populated low-lying deltas (such as the Ganges, Indus, Yangtze, Mekong and Irrawaddy Rivers), also fall in or near this affected tropical region.

WEEK AHEAD May 17 thru May 25, 2017 (submitted to WH Comms)

May 18: David Bernhardt will have his Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing (for Deputy Secretary nomination) starting at 10:15am.

May 18: Zinke will complete first interview by GQ for a feature profile.
May 19: Zinke will be interviewed by Fox News for national and affiliate Memorial Day special.
May 23: DOI and Bureaus issue News Releases on President's FY18 Budget
May 23: Acting Deputy Secretary Jim Cason to Testify: House Natural Resources Oversight Hearing on the Status and Future of the Cobell Land Consolidation
May 24: Cameron and Mikkelsen to Testify on Reclamation Budget: Special Assistant to the Secretary Scott Cameron and Acting Commissioner Alan Mikkelsen will testify before the House Energy and Water Development Appropriations Committee, in a joint hearing with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, on the Bureau of Reclamation's fiscal year 2018 budget proposal.

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

TBD: Press Release on GoMMAPPS, a partnership program to improve protected species assessments in the Gulf of Mexico.

May 18: Press Release on Final Notice of Sale for Alaska Cook Inlet Lease Sale
May 23: Bloomberg Government Event: Jim Bennett to speak during Bloomberg government event, "Invest in Innovation: Building the Economy of the Future." Event is from 4:00pm to 6:00pm at the Bloomberg global headquarters in New York. The program will be staged before a live audience of 100 senior investors, including asset managers, institutional investors and private equity investors, executives from energy companies, and top government officials focused on clean energy and sustainable investing. It will be open to the media and will be on the record.

Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement

May 22: News Release announcing new BSEE Director

Bureau of Indian Affairs

May 22: The Land Buy Back Program would like to issue its next release, announcing that \$\$ millions in buyback offers have been mailed to enrolled members of the Winnebago (Wisconsin) and Omaha (Nebraska) Tribes. (This is the latest in a series of releases when buy-back offers are made to tribal members) Note May 23: House Oversight Hearing on LBBP.

U.S. Geological Survey

May 18: USGS National News Release: In Next Decades, Frequency of Coastal Flooding Will Double Globally. Background: The research paper, "Doubling of coastal flooding frequency within decades due to sea-level rise," is scheduled to be published online in Nature Science Reports, May 18. Embargo lifts at 9:00 am EDT.
May 18: USGS Local Media Advisory: Earthquake Alliance to meet at USGS
May 23: USGS National News Release: *draft* New Iguana Species Discovered
May 23: Joint National News Release: Searching to Study the Remaining Few - USGS Science on World Turtle Day
TBD: Strategic Minerals Release

Speaking Invitations

Accepted

5/25 US Oil & Gas Association Board of Directors Meeting (DC)
5/31 Alaska Oil and Gas Association Conference remarks in Anchorage
6/6 Recreation Vehicle Industry Association Joint Committee Lunch (DC)

Regretted

5/19 Montana Logging Association Annual Meeting (Bozeman, MT)
 5/19 Haskell Indian Nations University Commencement (Lawrence, KS)
 5/19 Montana Marine Corps League Convention (Anaconda, MT)
 5/19 Laffer Associates Conference (DC)
 5/20 Zoar Maifest National Historic Landmark Designation (Zoar, OH)
 5/20 Mineral County Community Support Group's Annual Armed Forces Appreciation Day (Superior, MT)
 5/23 7th Annual Massachusetts Fallen Heroes Dinner (Boston, MA)
 5/23 Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians Mid-Year Convention (Portland, OR)
 5/24 Virginia Chamber of Commerce Energy Conference (Surrogate is V Devito)
 5/24 National Wildlife Refuge Association (DC)
 5/28 Rolling Thunder Demonstration Run (DC)
 5/29 Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund Memorial Day Event (DC)
 6/3 Ducks Unlimited National Convention (San Antonio, TX)
 6/4 Annual Native American Economic Development Conference (Las Vegas, NV)
 6/4 Montana American Legion Boys State Session (Helena, MT)
 6/5 Society of American Indian Government Employees Annual Training Program (Scottsdale, AZ)
 6/12 Association of American State Geologists Annual Meeting (Branson, MO)
 6/13 National Conference of American Indians (Mohegan Sun, CT)
 6/13 National Marine Sanctuary Foundations' Ocean Awards Gala (DC)
 6/14 Western Farm Bureaus Meeting (Coeur d'Alene, ID)

Outstanding Invitations in Process

5/23 Southwest Border Forum (Phoenix, AZ)

Emergency Management

In Georgia, the West Mims Fire in the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge has burned 152,231 (no change) acres. The fire is 31-percent (+8) contained and managed by a Type-1 Incident Management Team with 1050 (+79) personnel, including 179 (+25) DOI personnel. There are 320 (-480) residences and 7 (no change) commercial structures threatened. The containment date is November 1.

The Crown Mountain Fire, which began on May 14 within the Big Bend National Park in Texas, has burned 944 (-97) acres. The fire is 89-percent (+9) contained and managed by a Type-3 Incident Management Team with 81 (-81) personnel, including 16 (-20) DOI personnel. Demobilization and transition to a Big Bend National Park Type-4 IMT is ongoing. The containment date is May 22.

Media of Interest

Bernhardt Faces Opposition As Nominee For Top Interior Spot.

The Washington Examiner (5/17) reports that, in “an eleventh-hour push,” more than 100 environmental groups sent a letter to all senators calling for them to not support the confirmation of David Bernhardt as Interior Department deputy secretary. The groups argue that “Bernhardt’s representation of oil, coal and mining companies during his career in private legal practice as a major conflict of interest that will jeopardize the nation’s federal lands.” In the letter, the groups argue Bernhardt “should not seek, accept or be granted any exemptions from issues that he may have a conflict.” The Hill (5/17, Henry) predicts “a contentious confirmation hearing,” with opponents “gearing up to scrutinize his professional history and the role he intends to play in a Trump Interior Department that had already ruffled feathers among greens and conservationists.” Critics say that Bernhardt’s lobbying makes him a “walking conflict of interest.”

Zinke: National Bison Range To Remain Under FWS Management.

The Missoulian (MT) (5/17, Chaney) reports Interior Secretary confirmed his intention to keep the National Bison Range under US Fish and Wildlife Service management. FWS was “on track to transfer Bison Range management to” the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) “until the end of President Barack Obama’s administration.” Zinke said in a Wednesday press release, “As secretary, my job is to look 100 years forward at all of Interior’s resources. I recognize the Bison Range is a critical part of our past, present and future, which is why I have changed course.” Zinke announced April 12 his intention to revisit the transfer plan “and restart the Bison Ridge’s comprehensive conservation plan,” and Wednesday’s announcement “expanded on that.”

Zinke: No Decisions Made On National Monuments.

The Lake Powell (AZ) Chronicle (5/17, Law) reports Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke was in Kanab, Arizona, last Wednesday after touring portions of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument with Kane and Garfield county commissioners. Zinke met with reporters in Kanab and emphasize that neither the Trump Administration nor the department had reached a conclusion on the possibility of rescinding or shrinking 27 of America’s national monuments. He told reporters, “These are absolutely places that need to be protected, and that is our ultimate goal, to make sure the land is managed well.” Zinke added, “Everyone wants to protect their culture and traditions. There are a lot of things we can do better.” According to the article, Zinke “emphasized that he and the Department of the Interior are considering input from all parties involved from local governments.”

Washington Monument To Display Plaque From Ireland.

The AP (5/18) reports the National Park Service on Thursday “will accept a plaque from the people of Ireland that will be hung in the staircase of the monument.” The plaque “highlights the connection between the 2016 centennials of the park service and Ireland’s Easter Rising.” The monument’s stairwell “has scores of commemorative stones, most of which were received in the mid-19th century,” and the NPS says news donations are accepted “only in very rare circumstances.”

Ex-BLM Head Tells US House Committee National Monuments Hurt Local Economies.

The Lake Powell Life (5/17) reports former BLM head Kathleen Clarke appeared before a US House committee and “blasted national monuments for harming local economies and communities’ way of life.” She told the committee, “Monuments have had significant and negative impacts on the traditional uses of these lands and on the lives and livelihoods of local populations.” She added, “Landscapes don’t disappear, but jobs do.” The article mentions her position “contradicts the findings of two recent studies into the effects of monument creation.”

BLM Looking For Ways To Speed Up Application Process.

Fuel Fix (TX) (5/17, Osborne) reports that a drilling application backlog is hampering new oil and gas drilling on federal lands, as more than 3,000 applications for drilling permits are awaiting review at the Bureau of Land Management, according to E&E News. Acting Director Mike Nedd said the agency is working on several strategies to speed up the application process. He said, “It may be a strike team. It may be shifting the workload to a different office.” Neal Kirby, spokesman for the Independent Petroleum Association of America, said, “Every day that goes by while independent producers — companies with an average of 12 employees — wait for their permits to be approved means more money out of their own pockets.”

SCOTUS Denies Challenge To New York Land Trust Decision.

The Rome (NY) Sentinel (5/17) reports the US Supreme Court on Monday denied a petition from a group of plaintiffs challenging “a New York federal judge’s March 2015 ruling that Interior had reasonably decided to take thousands of acres in Oneida and Madison counties, including the Turning Stone Resort Casino in Verona and the Oneidas’ 32 acres of reservation land in Madison County, into trust for the Oneidas.” Interior placed the land into a trust “following the 2013 agreement with the state, Oneidas, and Oneida and Madison counties that settled trust land and tax issues.”

White House Communications Report

Sent to WH Comms on 05/16/2017

Inquiries

- A number of local outlets (REQUEST) Looking for the Department’s statement regarding the temporary pause in FACA committees. (RESPONSE) – "The Secretary is committed to restoring trust in the Department’s decision-making and that begins with institutionalizing state and local input and ongoing collaboration, particularly in communities surrounding public lands. The Department currently has more than 200 boards, committees, and other internal and external advisory functions that are authorized to solicit input and meet periodically. To maximize feedback from these boards and ensure their compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act and the President’s recent executive orders, the Department is currently reviewing the charter and charge of each Board/Advisory Committee. This review process necessitates the temporary postponement of advisory committee meetings. As the Department concludes its review in the weeks ahead, agencies will notice future meetings to ensure that the Department continues to get the benefit of the views of local communities in all decision-making on public land management."

Top Stories

- E&E Daily: 3K drilling permit applications await BLM approval
- Washington Examiner: Environmental groups seek to block Bernhardt's confirmation at Interior
- KPAX TV (MT): National Bison Range to retain federal management

Top Issues and Accomplishments

- FYI – 150 Left Green Groups urge Senate to vote no on Dep Sec Nominee Bernhardt. The Outdoor Recreation Industry Roundtable wrote a letter supporting.
- Last week Secretary Zinke toured the Grand Staircase-Escalante and the Bears Ears national monuments as part of President Trump’s EO reviewing a number of large and controversial monuments. Dozens of media followed the trip. Very positive local coverage. A physical package of local clips will be sent.
- This week, Secretary Zinke is in D.C.
- THURSDAY – Zinke will complete first interview by GQ for a feature profile.
- FRIDAY – Zinke will be interviewed by Fox News for national and affiliate Memorial Day special.
- FRIDAY – The National Park Service will announce the price of the Senior Pass will increase to \$80. This is a Congressionally-mandated increase.
- NEXT WEEK – The NPS will announce the cost of the deferred maintenance backlog

Federal Register Listings

No items were cleared for the FR on Wednesday.